

ALOWAY KIRK; 3.

OR,

TAM O' SHANTER.

A TALE.

BY

ROBERT BURNS,

THE AYRSHIRE POET.

“ Whae'er this tale o' truth shall read,
“ Ilk man and mother's son tak heed:
“ Whane'er to Drink you are inclin'd,
“ Or Cutty Sarks rin in your mind,
“ Think—ye may buy the joys o'er dear;
“ Remember TAM O' SHANTER'S MARE.



THE YAWOLA
TAM O' SHANTER.

WHAN chapman billies leave the street,
And drouthy neebors, neebors meet,
As market-days are wearing late,
And folk begin to tak the gate;
While we sit boufing at the nappy,
And getting fou and unco happy,
We think na on the lang Scots miles,
'The mosses, waters, flaps and stiles,
'That lie between us and our hame,
Whare sits our sulky, fullen dame,
Gathering her brows like gathering storm,
Nursing her wrath to keep it warm.—

This truth fand honest TAM O' SHANTER,
As he frae Ayr ae night did canter;
(Auld Ayr, wham ne'er a town surpasses,
For honest men and bonny lasses.)

O TAM! hadst thou but been sae wise,
As ta'en thy ain wife KATE's advice!
She tauld thee weel thou was a skellum,
A blethering, blustering, drunken bellum;
That frae November till October,
Ae market-day thou was na sober;
That ilka melder, wi' the Miller,
Thou sat as lang as thou had filler;
That every naig was ca'd a shoe on,
The Smith and thee gat roaring fou on;
That, at the Laird's House, even on Sunday,
Thou drank wi' Kirkton Jean till Monday.—
She prophesied that, late or soon,
Thou wad be found deep-drown'd in Doon;



Or catch'd wi' warlocks in the mirk,
By ALOWAY's auld haunted kirk.—

Ah, gentle dames! it gars me greet,
To think how many counsels sweet,
How many lengthen'd, sage advices,
The husband frae the wife despises!

But to our Tale: Ae market night,
TAM had got planted unco right;
Fast by an ingle, bleezing finely,
Wi' reaming swats, that drank divinely;
And, at his elbow, Souter JOHNNY,
His ancient, trusty, drouthy crony;
TAM lo'ed him like a vera brither,
They had been fou hale weeks thegither;—
The night drave on wi' fangs and clatter,
And aye the ale was growing better:
The Landlady and TAM grew gracious,
Wi' favours, secret, sweet, and precious;
The Souter tauld his queereft stories,
The Landlord's laugh was ready chorus:
The storm without might rair and rustle,
TAM didna mind the storm a whistle.—

Care, mad to see a man sae happy,
E'en drown'd himsel amang the nappy;
As bees flee hame wi' lades o' treasure,
The minutes wing'd their way wi' pleasure:
Kings may be blest, but TAM was glorious,
O'er a' the ills of life victorious!

But pleasures are like poppies spread,
You seize the flower, its bloom is shed;
Or, like the snow falls in the river,
A moment white—then melts for ever;

Or, like the borealis race,
That flit ere you can point their place;
Or like the rainbow's lovely form,
Evanishing amid the storm.—

Nae man can tether Time or Tide,
The hour approaches, TAM maun ride;
That hour, o' Night's black arch the key-stane,
That dreary hour he mounts his beast in,
And sic a night he takes the road in,
As ne'er poor finner was abroad in.

The wind blew as 'twad blawn its last,
The rattling showers rose on the blast;
The speedy gleams the darkness swallow'd,
Loud, deep, and lang, the thunder bellow'd:
That night, a child might understand,
The De'il had business on his hand.—

Weel mounted on his gray mare, MEG,
A better never lifted leg,
TAM skelpit on thro' dub and mire,
Despising wind, and rain, and fire;
Whiles hadding fast his gude blue bonnet;
Whiles crooning o'er some auld Scots sonnet;
Whiles glowering round wi' prudent cares,
Lest bogles catch him unawares;
KIRK-ALLOWAY was drawing nigh,
Whare ghaists and houlets nightly cry.—

By this time he was cross the ford,
Whare in the snaw, the chapman smoor'd;
And past the birks and meikle stane,
Whare drunken CHARLIE brake's neck-bane;
And thro' the whins, and by the cairn,
Whare hunters fand the murder'd bairn;

And near the thorn, aboon the well,
 Whare MUNGO's Mither hang'd herself.—
 Before him DOON pours all his floods;
 The doubling storm roars thro' the woods;
 The lightnings flash from pole to pole;
 Near and more near the thunders roll:
 Whan, glimmering thro' the groaning trees,
 KIRK-ALLOWAY seem'd in a bleeze;
 Thro' ilka bore the beams were glancing,
 And loud resounded mirth and dancing.—

Inspiring bold JOHN BARLEYCORN,
 What dangers thou canst make us scorn!
 Wi' Tipenny, we fear nae evil;
 Wi' Usquabae, we'll face the Devil!
 The swats sae ream'd in TAMMIE's noddle,
 Fair play, he car'd na de'ils a boddle;
 But MAGGY stood right fair astonish'd,
 Till, by the heel and hand admonish'd,
 She ventur'd forward to the light,
 And, vow! TAM saw an unco fight!
 Warlocks and witches in a dance,
 Nae cottillon, brént-new frae FRANCE,
 But hornpipes, jigs, strathspeys and reels,
 Put life and mettle in their heels.—
 At winnock bunker, in the east,
 There sat auld NICK, in shape o' beast;
 A touzie tyke, black, grim, and large,
 To gie them music was his charge:
 He screw'd the pipes, and gart them skirl,
 Till roof and rafters a' did dirl.—
 Coffins stood round like open presses,
 That shaw'd the Dead in their last dresses,
 And (by some devilish cantrip flight)
 Each in its cauld hand held a light—

By which heroic TAM was able
 To note upon the haly table,
 A murderer's banes in gibbet-airns;
 Twa span-long, wee, unchristen'd bairns;
 A thief, new cutted frae a rape,
 Wi' his last gasp his gab did gape;
 Five tomahawks, wi' blud red-rusted;
 Five scimitars, wi' murder crusted;
 A garter, which a babe had strangled;
 A knife a father's throat had mangled,
 Whom his ain son of life bereft,
 The gray hairs yet stak to the heft;
 With mair o' horrible and awfu'
 Which e'en to name wad be unlawfu';
 Three lawyers tongues turn'd inside out,
 Wi' lies seem'd like a beggar's cloot;
And Priest's hearts, rotten, black as muck,
Lay stinking, vile, in every neuk.—

As TAMIE glowr'd, amaz'd and curious,
 The mirth and fun grew fast and furious:
 The Piper loud and louder blew;
 The dancers quick and quicker flew;
 They reel'd, they set, they cross'd, they cleekit,
 Till ilka Carlin swat and reekit,
 And coost her duddies to the wark,
 And linket at it in her fark!

Now, TAM, O TAM! had they been queans,
 A' plump and strapping in their teens;
 Their farks, instead o' creeshie flanen,
 Been snaw-white, seventeen-hunder linen!
 Thir breeks o' mine, my only pair,
 That ance were plush, o' gude blue hair,
 I wad hae gien them aff my hurdies,
 For ae blink o' the bonny burdies!

But wither'd beldams, auld and droll,
 Rigwoodie hags wad spean a foal,
 Louping and flinging on a crummock,
 I wonder didna turn thy stomach.—
 But T A M kend what was what fu' brawly,
 There was ae winsome wench and wally,
 That night enlisted in the core,
 (Lang after kend on Carrick shore;
 For mony a beast to dead she shot,
 And perish'd mony a bonny boat,
 And shook baith meikle corn and bear,
 And kept the country-side in fear—)
 Her cutty fark, o' Paisley harn,
 That while a lassie she had worn,
 In longitude tho' sorely scanty,
 It was her best, and she was vaunty.—
 Ah, little thought thy reverend Grannie,
 That fark she coft for her wee Nannie,
 Wi' twa pund Scots, ('twas a' their riches)
 Wad ever grac'd a dance of witches!

But here my Muse her wing maun cour,
 Sic flights are far beyond her power;
 To sing how Nannie lap and flang,
 (A souple jade she was, and strang)
 And how T A M flood like ane bewitched,
 And thought his vera een enriched;
 Even Satan glowr'd, and fig'd fu' fain,
 And hotch'd, and blew wi' might and main:
 Till first ae caper—syne anither—
 T A M lost his reason a' thegither,
 'Then roar'd out—"Weel done, Cutty Sark!"
 Syne in an instant all grew dark,
 And scarcely had he Maggie rallied,
 Till out the hellish legion fall'd.—

As bees biz out wi' angry fyke,
 When plundering herds assail their byke;
 As open puffie's mortal foes
 When, pop, she starts before their nose;
 As eager rins the market-croud,
 When "Catch the thief!" resounds aloud;
 So Maggie rins, the witches follow,
 Wi' mony an eldritch shout and holo.—

Ah TAM! ah TAM! thou'll get thy fairing!
 In hell they'll roast thee like a herring!
 In vain thy KATE awaits thy coming!
 KATE soon will be a waefu' woman!!!
 Now, do thy speedy utmost, MEG,
 And win the key-stane, o' the brig;
 There at them thou thy tail may tosa,
 A running stream they dare na cross;
 But ere the key-stane she could make,
 The fient a tail she had to shake!
 For Nanny, far before the rest,
 Hard upon noble Maggie prest,
 And flew at TAM wi' furious ettle,
 But little kend she Maggie's mettle;
 Ae spring brought aff her Master hale,
 But left behind her aen gray tail;
 The Carlin claught her by the rump,
 And left poor Maggie scare a stump.—

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